



STARS

Strategic Teaming and Resource Sharing

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D. R. Woodlan, Chairman
Integrated Regulatory Affairs Group
P.O. Box 1002, Glen Rose, Texas 76043

Ref: Petition for Rulemaking PRM-50-77

STARS-02012

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September 4, 2002 (3:29PM)

Secretary, U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555
Attention: Rulemaking and Adjudications Staff

OFFICE OF SECRETARY
RULEMAKINGS AND
ADJUDICATIONS STAFF

STRATEGIC TEAMING AND RESOURCE SHARING (STARS)
COMMENTS ON PETITION FOR RULEMAKING PRM-50-77
CONCERNING ONSITE AND OFFSITE POWER SYSTEMS

Gentlemen:

This letter provides comments from the Strategic Teaming and Resource Sharing (STARS) ¹ nuclear power plants on the subject petition for rulemaking.

The petitioner proposes to change the Part 50 General Design Criteria (GDC) to remove the assumption that either offsite power or onsite power will not be available when a specific safety function is needed. One outcome of this change is to eliminate the requirement to postulate a loss of offsite power concurrent with a design basis accident. The petitioner feels that the current requirement to postulate the loss of offsite power concurrent with a design basis accident was imposed to try and capture a worst case scenario but in fact may be detrimental to safety. One of the lessons learned from TMI is that designing and training to worst case scenarios can be detrimental to safety. Unnecessary requirements can be imposed on systems and components, and operators may not be trained to handle the more likely scenarios for a specific design basis accident. An underlying premise justifying the proposed change is that a loss of offsite power concurrent with a design basis accident is so unlikely that it should not be part of the design basis.

STARS agrees with petitioner's premise and supports a rule change that would break the tie between the design basis accident and loss of offsite power. The rule change would not immediately impact current plants but would provide the flexibility needed for plants to make modifications in the future following the appropriate change process. The industry NSSS owners

¹ STARS consists of six plants operated by TXU Generation Company LP, AmerenUE, Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corporation, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, STP Nuclear Operating Company and Arizona Public Service Company.

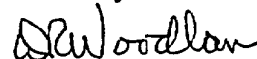
groups and NEI are already pursuing such a change with the NRC. The NRC has described this effort in SECY 01-133 and SECY 02-0057 as part of the "Option 3" initiatives to risk-inform the technical requirements of the regulations. Substantial work has been done by the industry which reinforces the petitioner's premise that a loss of offsite power concurrent with a design basis accident is sufficiently unlikely that it does not warrant inclusion in the design basis.

The specific changes proposed by the petitioner will effectively enable the changes being pursued in this part of the Option 3 initiative. STARS has the following specific comments on the proposed wording in the rule changes:

1. The changes proposed for the last paragraphs in GDCs 35, 38, 41 and 44 support the basic premise of the PRM and should be approved.
2. In order for the changes in GDCs 35, 38, 41 and 44, as noted in 1. above, to achieve the desired purpose of the proposed rule, GDC 17 must also be changed. STARS agrees with the petitioner that the beginning of the second sentence in the current GDC 17 should be changed to delete the parenthetical statement "(assuming the other system is not functioning)." In addition, the beginning of the sentence should be changed to read, "The safety function for the onsite and offsite systems shall be to provide"
3. Proposed Criterion 17 would limit the design basis for the onsite power system to anticipated operational occurrences. However, risk assessments may show that the onsite power system is important to some accidents. It is recommended that the proposed new paragraph in the PRM, which addresses the safety function of the onsite power system, not be approved. The function of the onsite power system is adequately addressed by the changes proposed in comment 2 above.
4. The existing requirement in Criterion 17 for "...One of the circuits shall be designed to be available within a few seconds following a loss of coolant accident..." is proposed to be deleted. This proposal appears to be acceptable since the requirements in the preceding sentence provide an adequate design basis.
5. The remaining changes noted in the PRM either have no real impact on the operation, design or analysis of licensed plants or do not relate to the basic premise of the PRM as discussed above. STARS does not recommend approval of these other changes at this time.

If you have any questions on the STARS comments, please call me at (254) 897-6887 (or dwoodla1@txu.com) or Wayne Harrison at (361) 972-7298.

Sincerely,



D. R. Woodlan, Chairman
Integrated Regulatory Affairs Group
STARS